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TITLE: UNITIZED MAT TO FACILITATE GROWING WOODY PLANTS

AMENDMENT "A"

Commissioner for Patents  
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Amendment A: CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently amended) A unitized mat to facilitate growing woody plants, comprising:

at least two polymeric material layers sized and shaped to cover an area immediately around at least one plant and selectively bonded together to define fluid-conveying passageways forming ~~one or more distribution headers~~ at least one distribution header and ~~a~~ at least one flow restricting means, the polymeric material layers having a plurality of perforations extending therethrough;

an inlet means for delivery of a fluid into ~~the~~ a first ~~distribution headers throughout header through~~ the polymeric material layers, said inlet means being in fluid communication with the first distribution headers header, said flow restricting means extending outwardly from said first distribution header; and

an outlet means for dispensing ~~and metering~~ fluid into a root zone area covered by at least one layer of said polymeric material layers and positioned at the perforations, said outlet means being in fluid communication with a second distribution header, said flow restricting means;

throughout the polymeric material layers being in fluid communication between said first distribution header and said second distribution header, said flow restricting means extending outwardly from said first distribution header to said second distribution header, said outlet means having multiple outlet ports corresponding to said perforations—

~~—wherein said flow restricting means is in fluid connection with the distribution header and a multi-dimensional array of said outlet means.~~

2. (Previously presented) The unitized mat of Claim 1, wherein the polymeric material layers have an opening in which the plant extends therethrough, the plant being a woody plant.

3. (Previously presented) The unitized mat of Claim 2, wherein said opening is adjustable, said woody plant having variable stem or trunk size.

4. (Previously presented) The unitized mat of Claim 2, wherein the polymeric material layers have an installation seam extending from said opening to an outer edge of the polymeric material layers.

5. (Previously presented) The unitized mat of Claim 4, wherein said installation seam has overlapping ends.

6. (Previously presented) The unitized mat of Claim 1, wherein at least one of the polymeric material layers are removably positioned in a container.

7. (Previously presented) The unitized mat of Claim 6, wherein at least one polymeric layer covers an area on a surface of said container.

8. (Previously presented) The unitized mat of Claim 6, further comprising a spring means for extending the polymeric material layers to cover the surface of said container, said spring means contacting at least one of the polymeric material layers.

9. (Previously presented) The unitized mat of Claim 6, wherein at least one of the polymeric material layers have a plurality of flexible extension flaps extending from the outer circumference thereof.

10. (Previously presented) The unitized mat of Claim 6, wherein at least one of the polymeric material layers have an outer circumference extending beyond edges of said container.

11. (Previously presented) The unitized mat of Claim 6, further comprising an anchoring means for restraining at least one of the polymeric material layers to said container, said anchoring means contacting at least one of the polymeric material layers.

12. (Previously presented) The unitized mat of Claim 1, wherein said outlet means comprise a plurality of outlet means evenly distributed over the area covered by at least one of the polymeric material layers.

13. (Canceled).

14. (Currently amended) The unitized mat of Claim 12, wherein said ~~outlet means~~ perforations are comprised of first perforations and second perforations, said first perforations extending through a first polymeric material layer only, said second perforations extending through a second polymeric material layer only, said first perforations being offset from said second perforations.

15. (Previously presented) The unitized mat of Claim 1, further comprising an anchoring means for restraining at least one of the polymeric material layers, said anchoring means contacting at least one of the polymeric material layers.

16. (Previously presented) The unitized mat of Claim 1, wherein said inlet means is in fluid connection with a fluid-filled container.

17. (Previously presented) The unitized mat of Claim 16, wherein at least one of the polymeric material layers are integral with the fluid-filled container.

18. (Previously presented) The unitized mat of Claim 1, wherein at least one of the polymeric material layers have a plurality of openings through which plants extend, the plants being woody plants.

19. (Previously presented) The unitized mat of Claim 1, wherein at least one of the polymeric material layers have a plurality of flexible extension flaps extending from the outer edge thereof.

20. (Previously presented) The unitized mat of claim 1, wherein at least one of the distribution headers is comprised of a flow restricting means.

21. (New) A unitized mat to facilitate growing woody plants, comprising:

at least two polymeric material layers sized and shaped to cover an area immediately around at least one plant and selectively bonded together to define fluid-conveying passageways forming at least one flow restricting means, the polymeric material layers having a plurality of perforations extending therethrough;

an inlet means for delivery of a fluid into said flow restricting means through the polymeric material layers, said inlet means being in fluid communication with said flow restricting means; and

an outlet means for dispensing fluid into a root zone area covered by at least one layer of said polymeric material layers, said outlet means being in fluid communication with said flow restricting means and comprising a plurality of outlet ports corresponding to said perforations throughout the polymeric material layers, said flow restricting means extending outwardly from said inlet means.

22. (New) The unitized mat of Claim 21, wherein the polymeric material layers have an opening in which the plant extends therethrough, the plant being a woody plant.

23. (New) The unitized mat of Claim 21, wherein the polymeric material layers have an installation seam extending from said opening to an outer edge of the polymeric material layers.

24. (New) The unitized mat of Claim 23, wherein said installation seam has overlapping ends.

25. The unitized mat of Claim 21, wherein at least one of the polymeric material layers have a plurality of flexible extension flaps extending from the outer edge thereof.

26. (New) The unitized mat of Claim 21 further comprising an anchoring means for restraining at least one of the polymeric material layers.

27. (New) The unitized mat of Claim 21, wherein said perforations are comprised of first perforations and second perforations, said first perforations extending through a first polymeric material layer only, said second perforations extending through a second polymeric material layer only, said first perforations being offset from said second perforations.

28. (New) The unitized mat of Claim 21, wherein said inlet means is in fluid connection with a fluid-filled container.

29. (New) The unitized mat of Claim 28, wherein at least one of the polymeric material layers are integral with the fluid-filled container.